

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 AMMAN 005550

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR NEA AND PRM; DHS FOR BCIS
CPA FOR WYLLIE; ATHENS AND ROME FOR BCIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/02/2013

TAGS: [PREF](#) [PREL](#) [KPAL](#) [IZ](#) [JO](#)

SUBJECT: JORDAN ALLOWS 386 PALESTINIANS TO LEAVE UNHCR
REFUGEE CAMP; HOPES TO CLOSE CAMP BY OCTOBER

REF: AMMAN 4001

Classified By: CDA David Hale, per 1.5 (b) and (d).

11. (C) Summary and comment: On August 24, the GOJ allowed 386 Palestinians (Palestinian-Jordanian women, plus their Palestinian-Iraqi families) to leave the UNHCR refugee camp at Ruweished and reside permanently in Jordan. While announcing the decision, GOJ officials stated that the refugee file is now "completely closed," and plans are underway to close the UNHCR camp and move the 500 remaining refugees to no-man's land. PM Abul Ragheb confirmed to the Charge August 28 that the GOJ hoped to close the UNHCR camp in October and urged the U.S. to speed up its plans to consider some of the refugees for resettlement. The GOJ seems eager to resolve the new war-related refugee caseload and could well move toward deportations of those without UNHCR refugee status or any claims to Jordanian residency. Stepped-up U.S. engagement on this issue -- including an early DHS resettlement mission and CPA authorization for Palestinians to return to Iraq -- will be key to continued GOJ patience. End summary and comment.

12. (SBU) On August 24, the GOJ allowed 386 Palestinians to leave UNHCR's Ruweished refugee camp and reside permanently in Jordan. This group includes all "mixed marriages" from the camp -- Jordanian citizens of Palestinian origin married to Palestinian-Iraqi men, plus their children (ref). In announcing the decision, the GOJ made it clear that this policy did not constitute a change in either its long-standing insistence upon the right of return for Palestinian refugees or its citizenship policies. (Many East Bankers view the GOJ's decision to admit these Iraqi-Palestinians as permanent residents of Jordan as a de facto move toward Queen Rania's controversial 2002 proposal that Jordanian women be granted the right to transmit citizenship to their children.) In public statements, PM Abul Ragheb and other GOJ officials also made it clear that Jordan would not accept any further refugees from Iraq and was considering plans to close the UNHCR refugee camp and move all 500 remaining refugees to the UNHCR camp in no-man's land, between the Iraqi and Jordanian border posts.

13. (C) Prime Minister Ali Abul Ragheb confirmed to the Charge August 28 that the GOJ hoped to "be done with the refugees" no later than October. The Charge urged the PM to reconsider his position, briefing him on U.S. plans to consider Sudanese, Somalis and possibly Iranian Kurds for resettlement as well as our efforts to organize the voluntary repatriation of Palestinians to Iraq. Emphasizing the GOJ's growing impatience with the refugee situation on the border, Abul Ragheb asked the U.S. to consider handling these resettlement cases on an expedited basis.

14. (SBU) Following the departure of the "mixed marriages," roughly 500 Palestinians, Sudanese and Somalis (including a group of 80 individuals that UNHCR hopes to present as a group referral for resettlement in the U.S.) remain in the UNHCR refugee camp. UNHCR reports that tensions are now quite high in the camp, as the remaining Palestinians fear that they will not be allowed to reside in Jordan and the Somalis and Sudanese who have not qualified for refugee status fear they will be deported. Both groups have begun hungerstrikes, while a Somali attacked a UNHCR vehicle on August 27. Another 1,000 Iranian Kurds and undocumented others remain in no-man's land between the Iraqi and Jordanian border posts. UNHCR Representative Sten Bronee plans to once again formally ask the GOJ to allow the no-man's land population to enter the UNHCR camp at Ruweished, a request he acknowledges the GOJ is unlikely to accept.

15. (C) Comment: The GOJ is unlikely to allow any other refugees -- Palestinian, Somali, Sudanese or Iranian Kurd -- to enter Jordan. The 386 Palestinians allowed to leave the UNHCR refugee camp were Jordanian citizens and their immediate families and the GOJ's treatment of them therefore has no bearing on its refugee policies. Jordan has a strict policy against local integration of all refugees, which is reflected in its various agreements with UNHCR. (Jordan's past decision to grant citizenship to nearly all of its West Bank Palestinian refugees has no bearing on the current

situation as it is tied to Jordan's previous claim to the West Bank and is not considered by the GOJ to be a precedent for other Palestinians.) The GOJ seems increasingly eager to find a solution for the new war-related refugee caseload and could well move toward deportations of those without UNHCR refugee status or any claims to Jordanian residency. Stepped-up U.S. engagement on this issue, including an early DHS resettlement mission (requested for early November 2003) and CPA authorization for Palestinians to return to Iraq (when conditions improve and UNHCR can once again handle organized returns) will be crucial to continued GOJ patience.

16. (U) Cairo-based regional refcoord cleared this message.

17. (U) Baghdad minimize considered.

HALE